

Philosophic Sagacity: Aims and Functions¹

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The general aim of this essay is to enhance understanding of philosophic sagacity as an approach to African philosophy by way of a theoretical justification and exposition, given that at times we tend to disagree on the utility and practicability of a viewpoint for the simple reason that we have not grasped the theoretical facet. In this endeavour, the essay has two specific objectives. The first objective is to explicate the analytical and general origins of philosophic sagacity. And the second is to delineate its major functions. To date there is lack of any form of disquisition that is devoted to deliberately distinguishing these functions. These two specific objectives are necessitated by the fact that of all the major approaches to African philosophy identified so far, philosophic sagacity is the most recent and hence proportionately the least understood, yet it has a cardinal role to play not only in academic African philosophy but in the social-political spaces and in suggesting solutions to problems in postcolonial Africa as well.

Analytic Origins: Anthropological Uniforms and Dialogue

H. Odera Oruka publicly pronounced philosophic sagacity as an approach to academic African philosophy to the international community in 1978.² Any meaningful exposé of philosophic sagacity cannot fail to address its antithetical relationship with the other two major approaches, namely ethno-philosophy and professional philosophy, for therein truly lies its analytical origins within philosophical discourse. At its inception, one of its major functions was to serve as a go-between for these two dominant, though antagonistic, approaches to African philosophy.³

The implicit belief in the *modus operandi* of ethno-philosophy was the false claim that philosophy in the proper sense was a mental activity peculiar to some races and civilizations: it was regarded as Greek or more generally European. The professional school, on the other hand, despite its genuine concerns and intentions in granting the existence of African philosophy, overemphasized on the connection between philosophy and some traits and methodologies that lent themselves to modernity to the exclusion of traditionalism, thereby also creating the false impression that traditional Africa was philosophy-free.

Hence, whereas ethno-philosophy denied philosophy to Africa *in toto*, the professional school only did so with regard to traditional Africa. The main difference between the two schools can also be interpreted in a slightly different way. While ethno-philosophy emphasized too much on the Africanness of African philosophy at the expense of philosophy proper, the professional school, on its part, over-focused on the professionalism of (African) philosophy and thereby relegating the Africanness into the periphery⁴. Philosophic sagacity, it was envisaged, would retain the Africanness in ethno-philosophy but show the redundancy of its false claim, and also retain the professionalism in the school of professional philosophy but manoeuvre its way past the professional school's attendant false impression. Or, as I have sometimes put it, philosophic sagacity focuses on African thoughts that are truly philosophical and conversely, on philosophical thoughts that are genuinely African.⁵

Cognizance of this fact is important because not all instances of African sagacity are philosophical. Some fall within the category of folk or mere sagacity.⁶ At the same time, it would be foolhardy to think that all philosophical thoughts are African.

In the introduction of his text, *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, Odera Oruka, in a rather non-conventional though captivating way, distinguishes philosophic sagacity from ethno-philosophy as follows:

One way of looking for traces of African philosophy is to wear the uniform of anthropological field-workers and use dialogue to pass through anthropological fogs to philosophical ground. The ethno-philosophers tried to do this but were unable to pass through the fogs, which they accepted as the definition of African philosophy. This was inevitable since the ethno-philosophers started with the strong assumption that African philosophy and Western philosophy must and can only be different.⁷

What is common to the proponents of philosophic sagacity and ethno-philosophy is that both wear the same uniform; that of anthropological field-workers. In addition, they both employ dialogue. However, they differ in the method and objective to which they put the dialogue to use. The proponents of philosophic sagacity employ it not only to see but more importantly to pass through the anthropological fogs. The ethno-philosophers, on their part, merely employ it to see the anthropological fogs; indeed the manner in which they employ it cannot enable them see through or beyond the fogs. They therefore take what they see to constitute African philosophy.

Using the same terminologies, one can also enunciate the similarity and difference between the perceptions of philosophic sagacity and the professional school. In as far as the manner in which they both employ dialogue goes, they are in agreement, for they use it to enable them operate at the philosophical ground. So, whereas ethno-philosophy employ dialogue as an end in itself, philosophic sagacity and the professional school use it as a means to an end. However, the difference between philosophic sagacity and the professional school lies in the uniforms they wear. Philosophic sagacity could begin its operations on the anthropological fields but then elevate to the philosophical terrain without necessarily discarding its uniform, the professional school, on the other hand, operates more-or-less exclusively on the philosophical plane hence the requirement of wearing the uniform of anthropological field-workers does not arise.

Conventionally, philosophic sagacity subscribes to the view that even in traditional Africa there exist individuals who are capable of critical independent thinking: that this mode of thinking is not a monopoly of the modern world, as insinuated by the professional school. Worth noting therefore is that, in so far as the definition of philosophy goes, philosophic sagacity is not at variance with the professional school. It retrains, and operates within the basic presupposition of the definition of philosophy of the professional philosophers (school). However, unlike the professional school, it is an expression of the wisdoms and beliefs of individuals who basically function within the traditional set-up. It consists of thoughts of rigorous indigenous thinkers.

These are men and women (sages) many of whom have not had the benefit of modern education. But they are, nevertheless, critical, independent thinkers who guide their thoughts and judgments by the power of reason and inborn insight rather than by the authority of the communal consensus. They are capable of taking a problem or a concept and offering a rigorous philosophical analysis of it, making clear rationally where they accept or reject the established or communal judgment on the matter.⁸

It is necessary to make a qualification regarding the adjective “traditional” in describing a sage, for this has been a source of discomfort too some. They have questioned if in this modern age there are any traditional Africans left. Parker English and Kibujjo M. Kalumba, for example, pose the following question: “What about the ‘traditional’ aspect of our characterization of ‘sagacity philosophy’? Are all the sages involved traditional? Have they been insulated from the rapid Westernization of Africa? If so, how?”⁹ According to English and Kalumba, African cultures are today not isolated from the rest of the world; hence the existence of traditional Africans in today’s world is a myth. The position adapted by English and Kalumba misses Odera Oruka’s point in philosophic sagacity. The important point which should not be lost sight of is that Odera Oruka in the philosophic sagacity project was interested in people who are deeply rooted in traditional African culture; rural people free from the effect of Western scholarship; people who are genuine representative of traditional Africa in modern setting. In fact, according to Odera Oruka:

Some of these persons might have been partly influenced by the inevitable moral and technological culture from the West, nevertheless their own outlook and cultural belonging remain basically that of traditional rural Africa. And except for a handful of them, the majority of them are illiterate or semi-illiterate.¹⁰

Three Functions of Philosophic Sagacity

In the conclusion of an earlier essay titled “Philosophic Sagacity Revisited”, I identified the three aims of philosophic sagacity to be: (1) bridging the gap between ethno-philosophy and the professional school; (2) a useful avenue in assisting formulate a systematic national culture; (3) a useful source of information, knowledge and education.¹¹ In this essay, I intend to elaborate on the three aims and will refer to them as the Academic, Cultural-Nationalist, and Epistemic functions, respectively. They can also be viewed as, or referred to as, trends in philosophic sagacity.

Academic Function: In the history of African philosophy several scholars have posited diverse views regarding the nature and definition of African philosophy. From the myriad of literature, one can observe that the bone of contention and the central point of issue regarding the nature of African philosophy, may be reduced and put in the form of a couple of questions.

First: Is philosophy the product of a universal human reason or is every philosophy in some significant way an expression of the culture which produces it? And, second, a different but closely related question: are logic, rationality, and argumentation intrinsic and even necessary characteristics of anything which claims to be philosophy, or are these just peculiar to Western philosophy and thus not normative to African philosophy?¹²

Prior to Odera Oruka's seminal essay, which according to Hallen was probably the first serious attempt to write the history of contemporary African philosophy, "Four Trends in Current African Philosophy"¹³, the various solutions suggested for the two questions posed above pointed in the direction of either the school of professional philosophy or ethno-philosophy. There were those who thought that philosophy is the product of a universal human reason and that logic, rationality and argumentation are its intrinsic characteristics. African philosophy was therefore no exception. This was the position of the professional school. On the other hand, there were those who believed that every philosophy is in some significant way an expression of the culture that produces it. Hence logic, rationality and argumentation may be intrinsic and even necessary features of Western philosophy, but not normative to African philosophy. So for instance, Lucius Outlaw rejects the claim that African philosophy has to be rational and argues that the concept of rationality as used in philosophy is a product of Western culture.¹⁴ This was the driving force of the proponents of ethno-philosophy.

It is when the academic confrontation between the ethno-philosophers and professional philosophers reached a critical stage; a stage that made any meaningful discussions on African philosophy between the two antagonists impossible, that Odera Oruka announced to the world philosophic sagacity as yet another trend in African philosophy. Philosophic sagacity therefore came in as a rescue team in the fierce academic battle between ethno-philosophy and professional philosophy. It sought to offer an escape route for those who found themselves entangled in the war of words but who nevertheless felt that the war was being fought on shaky front lines. This role of philosophic sagacity is what we refer to as the academic function. It was meant to disprove the position (or the impression) created within philosophical academic circles, by both the ethno-philosophers and professional philosophers alike, that traditional Africa was a place that was "free from philosophic, rational discourse and personalised philosophical activity."¹⁵ In this regard, the task and function of philosophic sagacity within academia was to grapple with the following question: "Was traditional Africa a place where no persons had the room or mind to think independently and at times even critically of the communal consensus?"¹⁶

The response of philosophic sagacity to the question above is in the negative form. In actual fact the negative response captures the very essence of the academic function of philosophic sagacity. For in truth, philosophic sagacity is an expression of the view that among the various traditional African communities there exist individuals who are critical independent thinkers. Or as Masolo ably puts it, the underpin of;

African philosophic sagacity is that in Africa, contemporary or traditional, there were and must still be wise men and women who, despite their lack of modern and formal education, convey critical thinking that is essentially philosophical and distinct from the type of general narrative description of cultural traditions, customs, and laws as portrayed by the old sage Ogotemmêli of the Dogon.”¹⁷

Philosophic sagacity therefore proves that the problem in traditional Africa is not that of logic, reason or scientific curiosity.

It shows that communal consensus, a fact typical of most societies, should not be seen as a hindrance for individual critical reflection. Just as religion and all kinds of dogmatic fanaticism did not kill philosophy in the West, traditional African folk wisdom and taboos left some room for philosophic thought.¹⁸

It is worth noting that Odera Oruka’s earlier essays on African philosophy written in the 1970s and early 1980s squarely operate within the confines of the academic function. His concern in the essays is to argue for and prove the existence of philosophers in the traditional set-up. He does not focus on the epistemological productions of their thoughts as such, and neither is the interest that of showing the relevance of their thoughts to cultural and national issues. It is in this spirit that Odera Oruka compared and contrasted Ogotemmêli’s and Paul Mbuya’s thoughts.¹⁹ So, if one were to make an assessment of Mbuya’s thoughts as presented in Odera Oruka’s “Sagacity in African Philosophy”, it is only fair that one does so against the background of the academic function of philosophic sagacity.

Cultural-Nationalist Function: The question of nationalism, or better yet cultural nationalism, has been a preoccupation of most post-colonial African nation-states. It has been a concern of politicians and scholars alike. After gaining political independence, most African nation-states came face to face with the reality of national unity. The diverse cultures of the various ethnic groups located within the same national boundaries posed a great challenge to the emergent African nation-states. Cultural issues have and continue to hamper national unity even today. These include ethnicity, nepotism, religious affiliations, regionalism and racialism. It is this negative impact of culture to national unity that underlies the second function of philosophic sagacity. In his research proposal titled “The Philosophical Roots of Culture in Kenya”, Odera Oruka’s main objective was to assist his home country ground itself as a harmonious nation by coming up with a national culture.

The researches would be undertaken in two phases. The objective during the first phase would be to unearth the culture philosophies of the various ethnic groups. During this phase, identification and explication of the fundamental principles upon which the various cultures are based would be made. The services of both folk and philosophic sages would be utilized.²⁰ However, during the second phase it is the philosophic sages who would play a cardinal role. They would be required to rationalize over and resolve those fundamental principles that are inconsistent. They would be relied upon to

recommend alternative ideas that are consistent and upon which a national culture would be constructed.

One should be able to fathom why we refer to this function as cultural-nationalist. This is because it is geared towards matters concerning culture in relation to the question of nationalism. Alternatively stated, it seeks to build national unity (second phase) using culture (first phase) as the pedestal. This is fundamental given the role cultural issues play in weakening national spirit.

Odera Oruka was convinced that in Kenya (as in most parts of Africa) unearthing of the philosophies of the various cultures was an urgent and primary concern. There were two reasons for this:

First, philosophy is always the moving spirit and the theoretical framework of any national culture. Any serious and meaningful national culture must have a philosophy. Second, because Kenya as a State is struggling tirelessly to ground itself permanently as a nation – and a national culture is always the axis of a nation.²¹

Some people hardly see the linkage between culture and philosophy. They believe that the two are totally different and have nothing to do with each other. Such individuals would therefore hardly appreciate the cultural-nationalist function of philosophic sagacity. This, however, is a mistaken view. Culture like any other practice always requires a rationalization and justification; it requires a philosophy. If culture is taken as a general way of life of a people, the way it is ordinarily taken, then to talk of the philosophy of a people's culture is to talk of the basic reasons justifying the people's general way of life. Therefore, for anyone to argue that culture has nothing to do with philosophy or that it needs no philosophy is to admit that there is no need for any people to justify and intellectually defend their way of life. Such a position is absurd and would have dangerous consequences for any culture and nation as well.

In his research proposal, Odera Oruka shows the relevance of a unifying culture in the definition of a nation, but not the State. He postulates that one important distinction between a State and a nation lies in the concept of culture. A nation has (or is supposed to have) a unifying culture; a State on the other hand has a unifying and formalized political power. Moreover, although a political power can defend and help develop a unifying culture, it need not itself be a sign for the existence of a culture. Odera Oruka then asserts that: "The Republic of South Africa, I believe, is an example of a State which is not a nation. And the Palestinian people together constitute a nation, not a State."²²

In the conclusion of his research proposal, Odera Oruka warns that it is time the fundamental principles justifying various aspects of culture were unearthed. This according to him is the great challenge facing African scholars and cultural conservationists. They should "investigate and unearth such principles. This is necessary both for posterity and for the development of a national culture. This investigation or research should be a part of the national programme in every African State."²³

Otherwise, they will remain States but far from being nations. Once the principles underlying and justifying the various aspects of culture have been unearthed, articulated, and harmonized to form a national culture then this would have the additional advantage of acting as check and withstanding the invasion by obnoxious foreign ideas. For postcolonial Africa to overcome this invasion it does not need guns; one cannot fight for or defend ideas by use of guns, one can only successfully fight for or defend ideas with ideas.

Epistemic Function: Within this function philosophic sagacity is considered to be a source as well as storehouse of knowledge. The interest in this function of sagacity is that philosophic discussions and discourses should focus on various features and themes that emanate from traditional African societies. These could be cultural, religious, linguistic etc. The basic difference between the epistemic function and the cultural-nationalist one is that, whereas in the latter function the aim is primarily to unearth the fundamental principles of culture with a view of harmonious co-existence, in the former function the aim is to generate and sustain philosophical discussions with African themes.

However, in order to enhance the fulfilment of the epistemic function, it is imperative that the thoughts of both folk and philosophic sages be written so that they are readily available for (further) philosophical discussions. The ready availability of such texts would not only be an immediate source of knowledge but would enhance further philosophical discussions. In this respect, Odera Oruka declares: “The time has now come to put their thinking and expressions into the written word for a larger audience and for the world community.”²⁴ With this done, the philosophical discourses that would stem there from would be based on underlying cultural principles that have been rationalized and justified by the sages.

Over the years, the rate of literacy in Africa has increased tremendously. More and more people are now relying on the written word as their source of information and knowledge. This is unlike the yester traditional African societies, which were largely non-literate and as a result, individuals relied on the spoken word. In such societies, sages played an important role as sources of knowledge and in the dissemination of the same through the spoken word. If sagacity is to fit in and be consistent with the modern African ambience, then it is necessary that the thoughts of the sages be well and neatly documented. For indeed, this is one sure way of seeing to it that the wisdoms of the society and the thoughts of the sages are readily available to, and influence later generations, with least distortion. Otherwise, if this were not done then, the very moment a sage dies would be like a situation where a whole library has burnt down. In this connection, Odera Oruka correctly observes that:

A society in which most people think libraries, books and museums are the real sources of what they need to know, will feel it has less need for a living sage than a society which lacks the advantage of numerous libraries, books and museums.²⁵

Odera Oruka’s observation is both cautionary and advisory. Cautionary in that we should take precautions so that whole libraries are not burnt down, and advisory in that in

modern Africa, documentation has become a reality; consequently, the thoughts of the living sages should be put in written word so that they become part and parcel of this reality. Otherwise, their thoughts will fall in an abyss. The thoughts of the ancient Greek philosophers continue to influence us even today. Thanks to the fact that they transcribed their thoughts or their thoughts were transcribed by others in some cases.

At this point one may want to ask if there is any peculiar attribute in the thoughts of the sages that warrant and strengthen the need for their documentation. The answer lies in Odera Oruka's later definition of a sage. Earlier, he had defined a sage simply as a person "versed in the wisdoms and traditions of his people."²⁶ However, later, he attached the ethical quality as a necessary component to the definition. The thoughts of the sage are to be seen as primarily concerned with the ethical and empirical issues, and questions relevant to the society, and his or her ability to offer insightful solutions to some of those issues. For the sake of explication, a lengthy quotation from Odera Oruka is inevitable. He is emphatic that a sage has two qualities or attributes,

...insight and ethical inspiration. So, a sage is wise; he has insight, but he employs this for the ethical betterment of the community. A philosopher may be a sage and vice versa. But many philosophers do lack the ethical commitment and inspiration found in the sage... A sage proper, is usually the friend of truth and wisdom. A sage may suppress truth only because wisdom dictates not because of some instrumental gain. Indeed, Pythagoras' definition of a philosopher as "the lover of wisdom" should have been reserved for a sage, since the sophists were the grave-diggers of wisdom and truth. Socrates was wrongly labelled, "philosopher"; he was first and foremost a sage. Socrates used philosophy only as a means to advance his sagacity and expose the hypocrisies of his time. But when all this is said, one must still emphasize that sagacity and philosophy are not incompatible...²⁷

The sages therefore play an important epistemic role in their respective societies given their ethical inspiration. The epistemic function of philosophic sagacity can therefore also be seen as the vehicle through which noble and desirable ethical principles and practices of a given community would be accentuated and hence readily preserved after being subjected to critical analysis.

In his essay "Sagacity in Development" Odera Oruka illustrates the practical epistemic significance of sagacity. In the essay, he argues and shows that if sages are used as sources of information then their explanations can go a long way in throwing light on the socio-cultural factors (problems) that affect change and development in their societies. Government and non-governmental organization officials in African countries who are concerned with development strategies and plans should therefore consult and utilize the thoughts of sages, if they sincerely wish to attain any meaningful degree of success in their development endeavours.²⁸

Conclusions

The rationale of the first specific objective of the essay was to locate philosophic sagacity in the history of the debate regarding the nature of African philosophy. It served the purpose of showing the similarities as well as differences between it and the other two schools namely ethno-philosophy and professional philosophy, for some individuals have often mistakenly conceptualized it exclusively in contradistinction to ethno-philosophy and professional philosophy. The second specific objective was meant to show that, contrary to popular belief, the function of philosophic sagacity is not unitary but diverse.

Of the three functions of philosophic sagacity, it is perhaps the epistemic one that has the potential of retaining its vibrancy for yet awhile. Within scholarship we are becoming more and more interested not only in knowledge of our past history and traditions, but in how that past can be sifted in the face of the shifting modern times. African and Africanist philosophers should not merely be contented with the explication and retention of good and desirable ethical principles and practices of African societies, but should also be concerned with how such principles and practices are to be mingled with those from Western societies. This of course requires familiarity with epistemological issues from both the societies.

Today the aim of the academic aspect of sagacity, of identifying the sages as proof for the existence of genuine African philosophy is becoming less necessary. This is because the argument that Africans are incapable of philosophizing is no longer tenable. On the face of it, the objective of the cultural-nationalist function is noble and admirable. It is practical in that it is concerned with finding solutions to a serious practical problem; a problem that revolves round matters of social, cultural and political concerns and integration. The first phase of this category will definitely interest to both scholars and non-scholars for some time to come. In Africa today, there is a concern, especially amongst the elders, that the indigenous population hardly know anything about their cultures, leave alone the philosophies underlying them. One may say that they are uncultured in as far as most of the traditions and social institutions of their communities are concerned. This is the implication and concern of one of the sages in Masolo's essay when the sage says the following of the young Luo generation: "In fact very many of them, cannot even speak correct Dholuo."²⁹ The Kiswahili saying "*mwacha mila ni mtumwa*" which literally translates to "he who abandons, ignores, or does not know his people's culture and customs is a slave" also captures the concern of the first phase of the cultural-nationalist function. However, the second phase of the function is more political than academic and hence meaningful involvement of scholars in it will continue to be minimal and elusive for some while given that the political arena in Africa is generally hardly conducive to scholars especially those in the humanities and social sciences.

Notes and References

¹ This is a revised version of the original paper I read during the 10th ISAPS Annual Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica in April 2004.

² This was during an international conference held in Accra, Ghana which was in commemoration of the intellectual achievements of Anthony William Amo. Amo was an Ashanti born in 1704, in the present day Ghana. He left Africa for Europe at a very tender age (in 1707) in circumstances not clear to us today. He studied and taught at several German universities. He returned to his native land in 1753, and it is believed he died soon thereafter.

³ H. Odera Oruka, 1990. "The Basic Questions About Sage-Philosophy in Africa", in *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy*, ed. H. Odera Oruka. Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, p. 65.

⁴ On arguments accusing the professional school of doing disservice to African philosophy by limiting it unnecessarily, one should refer to H. Odera Oruka, 1983. "Sagacity in African Philosophy", in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 4. Also see the preface of H. Odera Oruka, 1990. *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy* Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers.

⁵ F. Ochieng'-Odhiambo, 2006. "On Philosophic Sagacity", in *Philosophia Africana*, Vol. 9, No. 1.

⁶ H. Odera Oruka, 1991. "Sage Philosophy: The Basic Questions and Methodology", in *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, ed. H. Odera Oruka. Nairobi: ACTS Press, p. 34.

⁷ H. Odera Oruka, ed., *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸ H. Odera Oruka, 1990. "Four Trends in Current African Philosophy", in *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy*, ed. H. Odera Oruka. Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, p. 16.

⁹ Parker English and Kibujjo M. Kalumba, eds., 1996. *African Philosophy: A Classical Approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p. 124.

¹⁰ H. Odera Oruka, "The Basic Questions About Sage-Philosophy in Africa", *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹¹ F. Ochieng'-Odhiambo, 1997. "Philosophic Sagacity Revisited", in *Sagacious Reasoning: Henry Odera Oruka in Memoriam*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, pp. 176-177.

¹² J. M. van Hook, 1993. "African Philosophy: Its Quest for Identity", in *Quest* Vol. VII, No. 1, June. p.36.

¹³ See Barry Hallen, 2002. *A Short History of African Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.53.

¹⁴ See Lucius Outlaw, 1987. "African Philosophy: Deconstructive and Reconstructive Challenges", in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey* Vol. 5, p.13 and p.35.

¹⁵ H. Odera Oruka, ed., *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p.47.

¹⁶ H. Odera Oruka, 1987. "African Philosophy: A Brief Personal History and Current Debate", in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, Vol. 5, p.51.

¹⁷ D. A. Masolo, 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 234.

¹⁸ H. Odera Oruka, ed., *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, op. cit., p.47.

¹⁹ See H. Odera Oruka, 1983. "Sagacity in African Philosophy", in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Dec, p. 386.

²⁰ For a clear distinction between these two types of sages, one can refer to H. Odera Oruka, "Sagacity in African Philosophy", op. cit.

²¹ H. Odera Oruka, 1997. "The Philosophical Roots of Culture in Kenya", unpublished research proposal presented to the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, Government of Kenya, p.2.

²² *Ibid.*, p.4.

The reader should however note that some empirical facts have changed since the time when Odera Oruka wrote the proposal. Today the Republic of South Africa has attained political independence and the Palestinian people have an internationally recognized geographical territory of their own. However, the important point worth noting is the theoretical principle involved in Odera Oruka's reasoning; that a nation has to do with a unifying culture (not even geographical boundaries as such) whereas a State has to do with a unifying formalized power.

²³ H. Odera Oruka, "The Philosophical Roots of Culture in Kenya", op. cit., p.8.

²⁴ H. Odera Oruka, ed., *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, op. cit., preface.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.9-10.

²⁸ See H. Odera Oruka, "Sagacity in Development", in *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, pp.57-65.

²⁹ D. A. Masolo, "Narrative and Moral Perspectives: Conversations with Luo Sages", in ed. V. Y. Mudimbe, 1997. *Sapina: A Bulletin of the Society for African Philosophy in North America (An African Practice of Philosophy)*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 250.